

DEBENTURE—PORT OF APPALACHICOLA, &c.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 689.]

FEBRUARY 28, 1843.

Mr. RAYNER, from the Committee on Commerce, made the following

REPORT :

*The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill "extending further the right of debenture to the port of Appalachicola, and to define more clearly the extent of the district of Appalachicola," report :*

Owing to the want of other information, the committee have been compelled to rely, very much, upon the statements of the Delegate from the Territory of Florida, who strongly recommends the passage of the bill referred to the committee, as calculated to foster the interests both of the Territory of Florida and the whole country.

It appears from a letter from Hiram Nourse, collector of the port of Appalachicola, to the honorable David Levy, which has been submitted to the committee, that there will be more or less cases, every year, of a wish to enter goods at Appalachicola for re-exportation, and that imports would be greatly increased if the privileges contemplated in the bill were extended to that port, as its commerce is daily increasing ; that the arrivals at that port during the last fall were nearly one hundred, about two-thirds of which were square-rigged vessels, and near twenty from foreign ports ; and that a large amount of cotton is now shipped from said port to England and France, from both of which countries, as well as from Cuba and other foreign ports, more or less return goods will be received.

It further appears, from another letter submitted to the committee, that it is necessary, in the opinion of the United States district attorney, to define the western limits of the Appalachicola collection district in a more explicit manner—Cape St. Blas is only mentioned as the dividing line between that and the Pensacola district ; that it is believed that St. Joseph's bay is within the Pensacola district, though by custom, under the direction of the Department, it is in the Appalachicola district ; and that although the collector of the port of Appalachicola can make seizure within and without his own district, yet, if the district attorney brings his action, declaring it within the district, he will fail, should it prove otherwise, and, while the Secretary of the Treasury considers St. Joseph's within the Appalachicola district, the attorney for the Pensacola district could not properly bring the action.

The committee, relying upon the reasons thus set forth, report the bill as referred, and recommend its passage.

APPALACHICOLA, *December 11, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR: The subject of reducing St. Joseph's to a surveyor's port having been named, I have given it much reflection, and am of opinion that, under the present tariff, it would be unwise to change it from the present organization. It is a point where goods can be very easily introduced, evading duties, unless a faithful officer is at hand. Such I know the inspector to be; and he will not consent to remain at the compensation allowed surveyors, (say \$300 to \$500 per annum,) nor do I believe a good man could be found for that sum. It is true, there is no sort of business for the officer except to prevent smuggling; and, for this reason, many will suppose the expense (three dollars per day) too great.

It becomes necessary, in the opinion of the United States district attorney, to define the western limits of this collection district in a more explicit manner. Cape St. Blas is only mentioned as the dividing line between this and the Pensacola district; and it is believed St. Joseph's bay is within the Pensacola district, though, by custom, under the direction of the Department, it is in this district. I can make seizures within and without my own district; but if the district attorney brings his action, declaring it within the district, he will fail should it prove otherwise, and while the Secretary of the Treasury considers St. Joseph's within this district, the attorney for the Pensacola district could not properly bring the action. Under these circumstances, I have to request that you will introduce a bill defining the western limits, by inserting "Point St. Joseph," and include the waters of that bay, and embracing all the rivers emptying into the Appalachicola.

I am, very truly,

HIRAM NOURSE.

Hon. D. LEVY, *Washington.*

APPALACHICOLA, *December 20, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR: In the discharge of my official duties, I have had occasion to examine the revenue laws respecting the ports at which goods can be entered from the Cape of Good Hope and beyond the same, and find Pensacola and Key West are the only ports mentioned in Florida where such goods can be entered. The same rule applies in entering goods from any foreign port for *re-exportation*. There will be, every year, more or less cases of a wish to enter goods at this port for re-exportation; and imports would be greatly increased if this port were placed on an equal footing with those mentioned. It is not at all surprising that this has never been done, as no request of the kind has been made; but now it must be apparent to all, who look at the present and growing commerce, that such privileges should be allowed.

The arrivals at our port this fall are now nearly one hundred, about two-thirds of which are square-rigged vessels, and near twenty from foreign ports. We are now shipping to France and England a large amount of cotton, from both of which more or less return goods will be received, as well as from Cuba and other foreign place.

I am, very truly,

HIRAM NOURSE.

Hon. D. LEVY, *Washington.*